

Amendments to the Claims

Amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) A method of producing a poly-3-hydroxyalkanoic acid, which comprises carrying out a physical disruption treatment of a suspension of poly-3-hydroxyalkanoic acid-containing microbial cells with adding an alkali thereto either continuously or intermittently and, thereafter, separating the poly-3-hydroxyalkanoic acid.
2. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said addition of an alkali is carried out with controlling the pH of the suspension.
3. (Original) The method according to Claim 2, wherein the pH of the suspension is controlled between 9 and 13.5.
4. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 3~~ Claim 1, wherein said physical disruption treatment is carried out under stirring of said suspension.
5. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 4~~ Claim 1, wherein said physical disruption treatment is carried out at the temperature not less than 20°C and below 40°C.
6. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 5~~ Claim 1, wherein the poly-3-hydroxyalkanoic acid is a copolymer comprising of D-3-hydroxyhexanoate (3HH) and one or more other 3-hydroxyalkanoic acids.
7. (Original) The method according to Claim 6, wherein the poly-3-hydroxyalkanoic acid is a binary copolymer comprising of D-3-hydroxybutyrate (3HB) and D-3-hydroxyhexanoate (3HH) or a ternary copolymer

comprising of D-3-hydroxybutyrate (3HB), D-3-hydroxyvalerate (3HV), and D-3-hydroxyhexanoate (3HH).

8. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 7~~ Claim 1, wherein the poly-3-hydroxyalkanoic acid-containing microbial cells are cells of *Aeromonas caviae*.

9. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 8~~ Claim 1, wherein the poly-3-hydroxyalkanoic acid-containing microbial cells are cells of a strain of microorganism transformed by a poly-3-hydroxyalkanoic acid synthase group gene derived from *Aeromonas caviae*.